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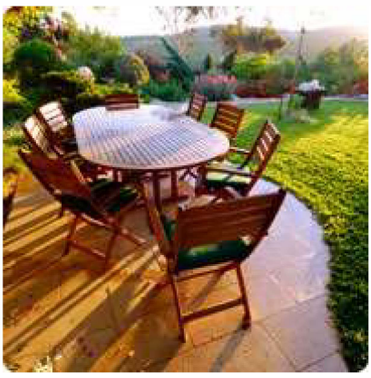
Our summer forecast

21 August 2009



Even though our forecast of August rainfall is for near- or above-average amounts, we also predicted above-average temperatures. Indeed we have had some spells of fine, dry and, in some areas, even hot weather so far this month.

The weather for July was disappointing, especially in terms of rainfall, which came after the fine weather in early summer and the heatwave at the end of June and beginning of July.

In April our seasonal forecast for the summer (June, July and August) stated that there was a 65% probability of a warmer-than-average and near- or drier-than-average summer. Our news release stated: “The coming summer is ‘odds on for a barbecue summer’…

“Although the forecast is for a drier and warmer summer than average it does not rule out the chances of seeing some heavy downpours at times. However, a repeat of the wet summers of 2007 and 2008 is unlikely.”

Some facts:

- Since the start of the school holidays we have seen above-average rainfall in some areas and temperatures generally above average.
- Many areas of the UK had a heatwave at the end of June.
- The hottest temperatures since the record-breaking month of July 2006, have already been recorded this summer. Many locations reached or exceeded 30 °C, with Wisley, Surrey recording the highest temperature of 31.8 °C.
- All three summer months have recorded temperatures above 30 °C.
- The Wimbledon tennis championships were virtually rain-free, providing the best weather at the tournament since 1995. The Glastonbury Festival was also mostly dry, the Ashes Test Matches and the Open golf have all seen mostly dry and sunny conditions.

Long-term mean temperature comparisons for the UK summer so far

Month	Long-term average	2009
June	12.6 °C	13.6 °C
July	14.9 °C	15.1 °C
August (to 16th)	14.7 °C	15.7 °C

Long-term average rainfall comparisons for the UK summer

Month	Long-term average	2009
June	72.6 mm	63.4 mm
July	69.6 mm	142.9 mm
August (to 16th)	84.6 mm	42.9 mm

Seasonal forecasting is a developing area of meteorology and, although these forecasts are nowhere near as accurate as our short-term forecasts, they do demonstrate some skill in predicting what may happen for a season ahead — if they are looked at over a number of years.

It is important that the Met Office, as well as others developing seasonal forecasting methods, continue to drive forward developments in seasonal forecasting and climate change. We have seen vast improvements in our short-range forecasting over the last 50 years due to our continuing research programme and we are confident that we will continue to see improvements in our seasonal forecasts as well.

Latest weather